

ORIGINAL

BEFORE THE
POSTAL RATE COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20268-0001

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POSTAL RATE COMMISSION
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

MAILING ONLINE SERVICE

Docket No. MC98-1

RESPONSE OF UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE
TO INTERROGATORY OF
THE OFFICE OF THE CONSUMER ADVOCATE
(OCA/USPS-10)

The United States Postal Service hereby provides its response to the following
interrogatory of the Office of the Consumer Advocate: OCA/USPS-10, filed on
November 23, 1998.

The interrogatory is stated verbatim and is followed by the response.

Respectfully submitted,

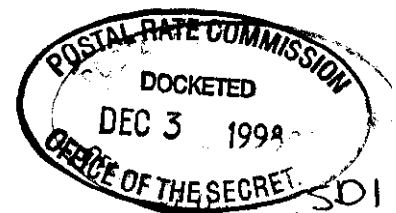
UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE

By its attorneys:

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December 3, 1998



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TO INTERROGATORIES OF THE OFFICE OF THE CONSUMER ADVOCATE

OCA/USPS-10. The OCA is in receipt of an MOL piece postmarked November 9, 1998. The OCA is informed by the sender that the piece was originally submitted as a Word document in Arial font. However, as received, the piece appears to be in Helvetica font. (The character, capital R, differs in the two fonts.)

- a. Please explain why and how a document submitted in Word format using the font Arial was printed and sent to the recipient in the font Helvetica.
- b. Are MOL documents converted to PDF format prior to on-line approval by a customer?
- c. Is the file sent to a customer for on-line approval in original (e.g., Word) format, PDF format, HTML format, or some other file format? Please explain.
- d. Are MOL customers responsible for detecting subtle changes in their documents during on-line approval? Please explain.
- e. Isn't the goal of simplicity via one-stop WWW shopping subverted if the MOL system software makes subtle changes to documents that are not readily detectable on-screen? If the software does in fact make such changes, doesn't this encourage the use of mail-back proofing, and defeat the goal of single session completion of a transaction? Please explain.
- f. If an MOL customer submits a document in an approved format (e.g., Word), shouldn't the MOL software be able to send the document to the printer exactly as submitted? If not, why not?
- g. Shouldn't a digital printer at a print site be capable of printing a document exactly as received from San Mateo? If not, why not?

RESPONSE:

- a. The Adobe software used by the system, when creating the PDF, substitutes the Helvetica font for Arial (currently).
- b. Yes.
- c. The on-line approval process involves the viewing of a PDF file.
- d. The on-line proofing process provides the user an opportunity to view and accept a document as it will be printed and mailed. Two other proofing options are available – mail-back and fax-back. The user's guide and the on-line help facility both encourage users to review the on-line proof for verisimilitude and where possible to use standard application fonts to

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avoid changes caused by font substitution. The responsibility for reviewing and accepting the PDF proof is up to the user; and if a user accepts the proof(s) presented and continues on with the mailing submission process, it must be assumed that they have reviewed the proof of their document, in one or more formats, and accept any changes which have been made, subtle or otherwise.

- e. The rationale for the use of the existing process arises from the problems inherent in printing documents originating from multiple creators. Many thousands of different fonts and multiple printer language output formats have created a need for a virtual tower of Babel in the commercial printing environment. The Portable Document Format (PDF) bridges the gaps of font availability and printer language compatibility by creating a common denominator file output. Adobe Corporation, which created the revolutionary *Postscript* print language, also created PDF. Using their extensive knowledge of printing technology they created a Rosetta stone application. Any time a print language file is generated certain formatting decisions are automatically made in the process; they are customarily proprietary to the type and model of the printer and manufacturer involved. The PDF process creates a file which is printer independent and preserves fonts and formatting regardless of the output device used; this is why the MOL online proof always represents a "what you see is what we print" preview. Furthermore, PDF only introduces changes when necessary to preserve portability and is designed to minimize the effect of

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whatever changes are required. This design has the benefit of keeping the MOL system "open" and allowing the involvement of the greatest number of printers and manufacturers for print resources.

- f. Any native (e.g., Word) document file must be converted to a printer output file prior to printing. Please see the answer to part (e) above for an explanation of why PDF was chosen as a common output format for MOL.
- g. Yes.

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I hereby certify that I have this day served the foregoing document upon all participants of record in this proceeding in accordance with section 12 of the Rules of Practice.

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